

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2015
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB371

Hearing Date: Tuesday January 27, 2015
Committee On: Education
Introducer: Sullivan
One Liner: Create and provide duties for the Nebraska Council for Educational Success

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:

Aye: 8 Senators Baker, Cook, Groene, Kolowski, Morfeld, Pansing Brooks, Schnoor, Sullivan

Nay:

Absent:

Present Not Voting:

Verbal Testimony:

Proponents:

Senator Kate Sullivan
Mike Baumgartner
Tip O

Virginia Moon
Jodi Kupper
Susan Fritz
Dennis Baack

Representing:

Introducer
Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Nebraska
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Nebraska State College System
University of Nebraska
Nebraska Community College Association

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Brian Halstead

Representing:

Nebraska Department of Education

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

LB 371 is a bill that would create the Nebraska Council for Educational Success, whose focus would be to make recommendations to the legislature and educational governing bodies in the state on ways to: 1) Increase collaboration between publicly funded programs from early childhood through postsecondary education, 2) identify a process for measuring the progress of implementation of the strategic plan for education pursuant to section 50-427, and (3) make recommendations for a more coordinated, integrated, & seamless education system that enables children to enter school ready to learn, receive challenging instruction throughout their school careers, graduate from high school ready for postsecondary education and careers, and continue their education through postsecondary study in ways that make them productive in the workforce and successful citizens.

Section 1. Provides for the creation of the Nebraska Council for Educational Success and identifies the following individuals to be a member of the council, with the list provided not being exhaustive of the council membership:

The Commissioner of Education (Co-Chair);

The Executive Director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (Co-Chair);

The Governor or his or her designee;
The chairpersons of the Education, Appropriations, and Revenue Committees, respectively; and
A parent of a child in K-12, who shall be appointed by the Governor, to name a few of identified members of the council.

Members appointed by the Governor shall serve for a term of three years and can be reappointed.

Section 2. Provides that the purpose of the Nebraska Council for Educational Success is to:

Strengthen collaboration between state funded programs from early childhood through postsecondary education;
Identify a tool to measure the implementation of the strategic plan for education provided under 50-427; and
Make recommendations to the Nebraska Legislature and educational governing bodies in the state, regarding ways to ensure that our education system is more coordinated, integrated and seamless so that our children are properly prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Section 3. Requirements for the Nebraska Council for Educational Success are as follows:

The Council shall meet at least once each quarter;
Receive testimony from the public and nongovernmental entities regarding ways that coordination between elementary, secondary and postsecondary education can be improved;
Keep a record of all of the Council's proceedings, ensure that its meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, and to recognize that "all records and documents of the Council shall be public records as provided under 84-712 to 84-712.09, (which sections specify Public Records in Nebraska); and
The Council is required to submit an annual report of their proceedings to the Governor and the Legislature.

Section 4. Provides that the Nebraska Department of Education and the Coordinating Council for Postsecondary Education shall provide administrative support for the Nebraska Council for Educational Success. Support provided under this section shall include creation of a website, equipment and office space. This section also requires state agencies and state postsecondary educational institutions to provide campus, technical or statewide data unless protected by federal or state law.

Section 5. The Nebraska Council for Educational Success shall make recommendations to the Legislature and or appropriate educational governing bodies for researched based ideas that include (please note this list is not exhaustive):

Strengthen mechanisms to increase the number and academic quality of students who enroll in teacher education programs offered by Nebraska colleges and universities, including, but not limited to, financial aid programs for students enrolled in such programs, with an emphasis on increasing the number of students to teach in identified or expected shortage area as defined in section 79-8,133;

Strengthen mechanisms to ensure the successful transition of children from early childhood education programs to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to postsecondary education or the workforce, or both; and

Strengthen mechanisms to increase constructive parental involvement that improves the educational outcomes for their children.

Explanation of amendments:

AM1268 would make the following changes to LB 371:

Clarifies that the Commissioner of Education shall serve as the Chairperson of the Council;
Removes as co-chairperson, the Executive Director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education;
Clarifies that the members of the legislature who sit on the committee, do so as, non-voting, ex-officio members;
Clarifies that the governor shall appoint members with the specified qualifications beginning in subsection "(12)" and not subsection "(13)" as originally stated;
Provides that the members of the council shall pick among themselves the individual who shall serve as co-chairperson;

Removes the Coordinating Commission of Postsecondary Education from providing administrative support;
Clarifies that the Council may create committees to study various issues of which they will make recommendations but requires the Council at a minimum to create 3 committees to study the areas of: College and Career Readiness; Postsecondary Education Affordability & Access; and Business & Education Innovation. This section also provides that the council may utilize the assistance of individuals whom the Council deem have a particular expertise in an area of study.

Kate Sullivan, Chairperson